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Message Text

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/035 R

DRAFTED BY EUR/SOV:MHENDERSON:VB
APPROVED BY EUR:JAARMITAGE
---------- 086801 /61
O R 220039Z DEC 76
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CASC, UR, US, CSCE

SUBJECT: MUKACHEVO CEMETERY

REF:A) STATE 294068 B) MOSCOW 19232

1. IN MEETING WITH DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ARMITAGE DEC 21 REPRESENTATIVES OF HASSIDIC COMMUNITY IN BROOKLYN (MUKACHEVO ASSOCIATION), ACCOMPANIED BY FORMER CONGRESSMAN FRANK DORN (APPEAL OF CONSCIENCE FOUNDATION), ASKED FOR URGENT INTERVENTION BY DEPARTMENT TO STAVE OFF CLOSURE OF MUKACHEVO CEMETERY. FROM NEWS IN MUKACHEVO PAPER, PASSED TO GROUP HERE, IT APPEARS LATEST POSTPONEMENT OF CLOSURE RUNS OUT DEC 31.

2. ARMITAGE EXPLAINED SEVERAL APPROACHES DEPARTMENT AND EMBASSY HAVE MADE AND AGREED TO RENEW INQUIRY WITH MFA. HASSIDIC COMMUNITY IS VERY ANXIOUS THAT CLOSURE OF CEMETERY BE POSTPONED AT LEAST UNTIL THEY CAN SEND SMALL COM-
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MITTEE TO TALK ABOUT ARRANGEMENTS FOR PRESERVING IT. NEITHER APPEAL OF CONSCIENCE FOUNDATION, NOR MUKACHEVO ASSOCIATION HAS RECEIVED REPLIES TO ITS INQUIRIES FROM SOVIET OFFICIALS.

3. EMBASSY SHOULD THEREFORE RAISE MATTER AGAIN WITH MFA,

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REQUESTING ANSWER TO OUR PREVIOUS APPROACH (REF B) AND MAKING FOLLOWING POINTS: 1) MUKACHEVO ASSOCIATION HAS LEARNED OF PLANS TO CLOSE CEMETERY AS OF DECEMBER 31 AND REQUESTS THAT CLOSURE BE POSTPONED UNTIL SMALL COMMITTEE

IS ABLE TO DISCUSS MATTER WITH RESPONSIBLE SOVIET OFFICIALS; 2) MUKACHEVO ASSOCIATION AND APPEAL OF CONSCIENCE FOUNDATION REITERATE THEIR DESIRE TO SEND GROUP TO USSR FOR THIS PURPOSE AND CAN TRAVEL TO USSR IN JANUARY OR FEBRUARY IF SOVIET AUTHORITIES AGREE; 3) EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE SPEEDY REPLY TO ITS NOTE OF DECEMBER 8.

4) DEPARTMENT OF STATE STRONGLY SUPPORTS EFFORTS OF MUKACHEVO ASSOCIATION AND APPEAL OF CONSCIENCE FOUNDATION FOR HUMANITARIAN REASONS AND BECAUSE OF DEEP INTEREST IN THIS QUESTION BY AMERICAN CITIZENS INVOLVED.

4. PLEASE REPORT SOVIET RESPONSE BY IMMEDIATE CABLE.
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